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Chairman: Mr. Ali ..... (Malaysia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 140: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*) (A/62/741, A/62/752, A/62/766 and Add.1, A/62/783 and Corr.1 and A/62/814 and Add.1)

1. **Ms. Kane** (Under-Secretary-General for Management), introducing the report of the Secretary-General containing the performance report on the budget of the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/62/766 and Add.1), said that the General Assembly had appropriated funding of $189,071,400 for the support account, and that expenditure had been $177,696,400, leaving an unencumbered balance of $11,322,000, representing an implementation rate of 94.0 per cent.

2. The main causes of the variance, explained in the performance report, were lower than expected expenditure on non-post resources, partially offset by additional requirements for posts, communications and medical services. The Secretariat had continued to improve the management of peacekeeping operations, with expected accomplishments achieving progress, as demonstrated in the results-based frameworks contained in the report and its addendum. The General Assembly was invited to take the action described in section V of the report in order to address the requirements for the financing of the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 and the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008.

3. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/62/783 and Corr.1), which represented a proposed total of $287,651,700, she said that the sum concerned was $57,141,800, or 24.8 per cent, higher than the resources approved for 2007/08.

4. Although the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/279 on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations, had provided additional resources, a significant increase in peacekeeping tasks had occurred after the adoption of the resolution, as a result of the establishment by the Security Council of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). Accordingly, the proposed budget for 2008/09 of the s.pport account for peacekeeping operations sought additional resources to address the continuing growth in the scale, scope and complexity of peacekeeping.

5. The increase was caused mainly by the proposal for 156 new temporary posts, including 78 posts converted from general temporary assistance positions, by an increase in standard salary costs, and by the application of a 4.9-per-cent vacancy rate to all continuing posts. Most of the requested increase in resources resulted from greater post requirements, which stood at $34,887,700, representing a 23.0 per cent increase over the approved support account post resources for 2007/08.

6. The $22,254,100 net increase in non-post resources resulted from increased expenditure on consultants, travel, facilities and infrastructure, communications, information technology and other supplies, services and equipment. The increase was partially offset by reduced expenditure on general temporary assistance and medical services.

7. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive analysis of the Office of Military Affairs in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (A/62/752), she said that the document considered the significant evolution in peacekeeping and the implications of that evolution for supporting military activities in field operations. To meet the challenges identified, and building upon lessons learned from the Strategic Military Cell, it also proposed ways to strengthen the Office of Military Affairs through additional restructuring. Lastly, it provided information on additional support account resource requirements resulting from the proposal for 92 new posts, and included the proposed organizational structure of the Office of Military Affairs.

8. The preliminary report on the status of implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/279 on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations (A/62/741), submitted in response to a request made by the General Assembly in that resolution, reviewed the progress made in restructuring the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, including the establishment of the Department of Field Support. Highlighting other recent developments in peacekeeping and ongoing

challenges in mounting, maintaining and sustaining peacekeeping operations, it also indicated the effect of those developments and challenges on the process of restructuring.

9. **Mr. Abelian** (Secretary of the Committee) conveyed apologies on behalf of Mr. Walker, Chairman of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC), who was unavailable to present the IAAC report on the budget proposals of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) with respect to the support account for peacekeeping operations (A/62/814 and Add.1), which had been circulated to the members of the Committee. The report, which had been prepared in accordance with the IAAC terms of reference annexed to General Assembly resolution 61/275, explained the belief of IAAC that, in connection with the proposed restructuring of the OIOS Inspection, Evaluation, Internal Audit and Investigations Divisions, OIOS should avoid establishing a proposed budget before its workplans were finalized. The addendum to the report, meanwhile, set out the views of IAAC on the specific matter of restructuring the OIOS Investigations Division.

10. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the report of the Advisory Committee on the financial performance report for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 and proposed budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009, which contained recommendations on the series of reports of the Secretary-General connected with the support account (A/62/741, A/62/766 and Add.1, A/62/783 and A/62/752) and had, exceptionally, been made available to the Committee in advance, unedited, form in English only.*

11. In its observations regarding the preliminary report on the status of implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/279 on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations (A/62/741), the Advisory Committee acknowledged that the restructuring process was still evolving, but expressed disappointment that the Secretariat had not provided a more transparent and detailed account of the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered. In the Advisory Committee's view, inadequately explored potential problems involving the proposed chain of command, accountability, coordinating and maintaining an adequate system of checks and balances, the role of the Deputy Secretary-General, the role of integrated operational teams and delegation of authority from the Department of Management to the Department of Field Support should be addressed in detail in the comprehensive report to be submitted to the General Assembly at the second part of its resumed sixty-third session.

12. The Advisory Committee was concerned at the delays in selecting and appointing senior officials of the Department of Field Support and at the potential effect on performance of many senior managers in that department and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations being recent appointees. Taking the view that both departments should begin to have more stable personnel structures, it requested the Secretary-General to manage the sequence of staffing changes in a phased manner in the future, especially for senior positions.

13. The increase in the volume of the support account in successive years had been justified on the grounds of increasing demand for peacekeeping operations, and the proposed support account budget for 2008/09 had continued that pattern; however, there was no reason to assume that peacekeeping activities would continue to grow indefinitely, or that the support account should grow at the same pace as those activities. The Advisory Committee therefore urged the Secretary-General to complete the comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the support account requested by the General Assembly, for consideration alongside the next proposed support account budget.

14. In its observations regarding the report of the Secretary-General containing the performance report on the budget of the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/62/766 and Add.1), the Advisory Committee noted that the reason for the funding shortfalls of the support account for 2006/07 and 2007/08 was the incorrect application of the excess balances available in the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund for the periods ended 30 June 2004 and 30 June 2005. It recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's suggested method of regularizing the shortfall.

* The report was subsequently issued as document A/62/855.

15. In its observations regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/62/783 and Corr.1), the Advisory Committee had made recommendations regarding post and non-post resources based on what it considered necessary for direct support to operational requirements in the field. Accordingly, of the 156 posts requested by the Secretary-General in his report, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of 54, recommended against approval of 31, and recommended the continuation of 71 general temporary assistance positions.

16. In view of the pattern of recent years, it recommended that continuing posts should have applied to them a vacancy rate of 8 per cent (rather than the proposed 4.9 per cent) for Professional and 4.5 per cent (rather than the proposed 1.5 per cent) for General Service and related posts. In several cases, continued general temporary assistance had been sought from one budget period to the next, a practice which the Advisory Committee considered to lack budgetary transparency and to complicate proper oversight. As general temporary assistance was intended to cope with exceptional workload or to replace staff on leave, it should not be used for functions of a continuing nature or for prolonged periods.

17. Addressing the proposals in the report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive analysis of the Office of Military Affairs in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (A/62/752), the Advisory Committee expressed regret that they had not been made part of the proposed budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations, an approach which would have facilitated the analysis of the support account resources as a whole, and that they had not been presented in a results-based format. It would also have been an advantage to seek the views of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

18. In the view of the Advisory Committee, the report contained insufficient data to support the analysis of the capacity constraints which had hampered the Office of Military Affairs in the fulfilment of its mandate. The Advisory Committee questioned the proposed structure of the Office, which seemed unnecessarily complicated and failed to take sufficient account of possible complementarity with other units supporting peacekeeping activities, and also the establishment of analogies with national military strategic headquarters, which might not be relevant to the Office. However, it saw merit in enhancing the capacity of the Office in some areas, within its existing structure, and therefore recommended approval of 29 of the 92 additional posts proposed by the Secretary-General. It also recommended that the Secretary-General should indicate in the next proposed budget for the support account the full impact of the approved posts.

19. The Advisory Committee, recalling that the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/247, had endorsed the recommendation made by the Advisory Committee in its report on strengthening investigations (A/62/7/Add.35) that a complete analysis and justification of the envisaged restructuring of the Investigations Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services should be conducted, recommended against the proposed conversion of 63 Investigator positions funded as general temporary assistance, believing that they should retain that status pending the submission and consideration of the analysis, and also, for the time being, recommended against approval of the resources required to implement restructuring.

20. **Ms. Simkić** (Slovenia), speaking on behalf of the European Union, expressed concern that the report of the Advisory Committee on the financial performance report for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 and proposed budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 had only just been received by the Fifth Committee, one week after the scheduled conclusion of the second part of the resumed session. Moreover, as the report was available in only one of the official languages, the European Union wished to recall its position that the introduction of reports not translated into all the official languages should be permitted only on an exceptional basis, justified by time considerations.

21. Having previously expressed its opposition to the presentation of reports in a piecemeal manner, the European Union would have preferred in the current instance to have examined a single comprehensive report covering all the issues relating to the support account for peacekeeping operations, rather than to be

obliged to consider separately the structure of the Office of Military Affairs, a priority issue highlighted by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/279 on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations.

22. **Ms. Stevens** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that the reports before the Committee provided the basis for reviewing progress in the year that had elapsed since the decision of the General Assembly to restructure the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and increase the resources of the support account for peacekeeping operations.

23. The Member States were responsible for ensuring that United Nations peace and security efforts were adequately resourced and equipped to pursue their mandates, and had placed increasing responsibilities and expectations on the Secretariat in recent years. While the three delegations supported efforts to improve the strategic management of increasingly complex peace operations in the field, the proposed 2008/09 budget for the support account represented a substantial increase over the budget for 2007/08 and should be considered carefully, particularly in the light of the additional capacity approved only one year previously, the size of proposed peacekeeping budgets and the cost implications of delayed recruitment.

24. The three delegations noted the indication by the Secretary-General that additional resources were required in part to meet the needs of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), which had been established after the measures to strengthen peacekeeping introduced in 2007, and that the current lack of military oversight, guidance and expertise had an impact on the effectiveness and security of current operations.

25. They therefore saw merit in providing additional resources, but remained to be fully convinced that the proposals made in that regard would improve demonstrably the establishment, deployment and operation of peacekeeping missions; produce systematic improvements in the strategic management, safety and security of field operations and reduce the duplication of functions within the Secretariat while strengthening unity of command.

26. The three delegations would like further information on the place of the integrated operational teams in the initiatives which the Committee was considering, on proposals for information analysis, on the possibility of making military personnel available to the Situation Centre and on the prospect of providing a rapidly deployable military mission start-up capability for the field. They also wondered about the feasibility of some proposals, including the idea of placing the Chief of the Military Field Support Service in the Office of Military Affairs while making that individual's staff part of the Department of Field Support. Being keen to encourage coordination and avoid duplication, they doubted the added value of replicating some existing functions within the Office of Military Affairs, and also emphasized the importance of a clear chain of command between Headquarters and the field, stretching from the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to the relevant Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the field, to the relevant Force Commander.

27. **Mr. Muhith** (Bangladesh) said that his delegation deeply regretted the current situation, in which documents dealing with matters of great importance to Bangladesh, as a major troop-contributing country, were issued late in the session, leaving little time for well-informed decisions.

28. His delegation agreed with the observations of the Advisory Committee regarding the lack of sufficiently detailed explanation and information in the preliminary report on the status of implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/279 on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations (A/62/741), and regarding the risk of a shortage of expertise and experience in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support as a result of recruitment delays.

29. In his delegation's view, the action requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 19 of its resolution 61/279, in connection with the proper representation of troop-contributing countries in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, had not been taken; it would like updated information on that matter. Representation of troop-contributing countries in Professional posts in those Departments and in the field was unbalanced. As the countries concerned had a long association with peacekeeping, their experience should be drawn upon at senior levels.

30. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive analysis of the Office of Military Affairs in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (A/62/752), his delegation shared the observations of the Advisory Committee regarding the lack of input from the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the insufficient analysis of the Office's constraints and structure. Overall, the proposals regarding the Office were premature, as they were not backed by a thorough assessment of the impact of the restructuring of peacekeeping into the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support in terms of lessons learned, best practices and capacity and skills gaps. His delegation would therefore like more information on the basis for the proposals, taking into account the doctrine, planning and organization of peacekeeping.

31. **Mr. Mukai** (Japan) said that his delegation, agreeing with the observations of the Advisory Committee regarding the lack of sufficiently detailed explanation and information in the preliminary report on the status of implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/279 on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations (A/62/741), would like more information on the lessons learned and efficiency gains following the restructuring of peacekeeping into two departments one year previously. It would like to know how management challenges were being addressed and how coordination and accountability had improved.

32. Recalling that the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/279, had approved the establishment of a large number of posts, his delegation wondered how the Secretariat could justify a further 25-per-cent increase in posts, connected with the support account for peacekeeping operations. As that number excluded the requirements for the Office of Military Affairs, which should have been incorporated in the resource requests for the support account, the increase was in fact 35 per cent. In that connection, the piecemeal submission of the proposed budget for the Office of Military Affairs had prevented Member States from having a comprehensive overview of the budget proposal for the support account. It was encouraging that the report of the Advisory Committee, at least, had examined the support account, the Office of Military Affairs and the restructuring of peacekeeping in one document.

33. On the basis of the number of military and police personnel deployed in the previous twelve months, his delegation wished to know whether a surge in peacekeeping had in fact occurred in the current year, as it recognized that peacekeeping activity had naturally risen and fallen regularly in the past. The relationship between the growth in the support account and the growth in peacekeeping activities should be carefully considered. His delegation hoped that the report on the evolution of the support account expected by the General Assembly at its sixty-third session would make clear the division of labour between Headquarters and field missions and include a full analysis of the combination of military, police and civilian components. As the Advisory Committee had pointed out in its related report, more information on existing capacity should be presented whenever additional capacity was requested.

34. While understanding that the request to double the number of posts in the Office of Military Affairs had been motivated by a desire to strengthen information analysis, logistical support and planning and operational capabilities, his delegation wished to scrutinize the proposed budget of the Office as part of a more general effort to maintain budgetary discipline and exercise effective control over the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support. It agreed with the Advisory Committee that there was merit in enhancing the capacity of the Office in certain areas within its current structure, but cautioned against hasty action at the current transitional stage in the senior leadership of the two departments.

35. The relationship between the Office of Military Affairs and the Department of Field Support should be more clearly defined. In particular, more analysis should be undertaken before deciding whether to establish logistics posts within the Office, or recruit military officers for the existing logistics posts which supported field missions' military operations. Careful consideration should be given to how to incorporate into the Office of Military Affairs the military capabilities of the Strategic Military Cell, whose personnel, intelligence, operations and logistics services were dedicated exclusively to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The unclear interaction between the Office and integrated operational teams within the Office of Operations should be further explained.

36. In general terms, his delegation believed that close cooperation between the Office of Operations, Office of Military Affairs and Police Division in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support still appeared a better approach than creating posts in one department while embedding related staff in another.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.